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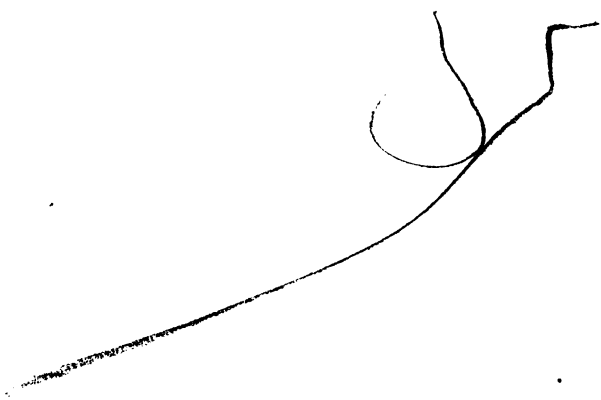

FLOWER o' the GRASS

BY

ADA FOSTER MURRAY

HARPER & BROTHERS
NEW YORK & LONDON
M · C · M · X

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TO POETRY

Beloved Art! beneath thy wings I creep,
Worn with a world where thou canst be decried;
Thou, too, my Beautiful, art thrust aside
Where dreams and shadows vague oblivion keep.
Here thou dost sit—thy shame is glorified,
Thy grief a queen's. Thy tears, if thou shouldst weep,
Were pearls which in life's acid we would steep,
Making it precious; but thou sitt'st in pride.

Dost thou recall how once thy leaf of bay
Outweighed all other tributes of mankind?
Dost thou remember still thine ancient sway,
Though now the world seems to thy beauty blind?
Or dost thou dream of that more glorious day
When thou thy larger sovereignty shalt find?

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FLOWER O' THE GRASS

ABOVE SALERNO

Silvery the olives on Ravello's steeps,
  Terraced the verdure of her nurtured hills;
Far, far below the blue Salerno sweeps,
  And on the shore her emerald largesse spills.
Lost in the haze of melting hills and skies
Sad Pæstum's plain in shadowy distance lies.

How the Spring flings her tribute to the breeze
  Through every slit in these long, winding walls!
Shunning the screen of flowery tapestries,
  The slim gray lizard, turquoise-vested, crawls—
Blind worshipper of the unconscious sun,
His pagan shrine, his splendid eidolon.

Here Scala lifts upon her furrowed breast
  Twin cities of the living and the dead,
Where toil the quick and where the buried rest,
  With Roman tombs low vaulted overhead:

In these strange dwellings life must surely seem
To hold the secret of its final dream.

The nectarine, peach and almond trees in flower,
  Play on the hues from deep to palest rose.
Shy druid birches guard a secret bower
  Where many a home-like English blossom
    blows;
With daisy, primrose, and narcissus shine
The lavish stars of Wordsworth's celandine.

On rocky, wave-girt slopes, where buds the vine,
  Golden and green the trellised orchards grow.
Beyond the beach's pale, receding line
  Roam dusky herds of sullen buffalo.
The distant Apennines' dark ranges wear
Halos of snow and amethystine air.

Can this be Italy, or but a dream
  Emerging from the broken waves of sleep?
Since even the rudest works of peasants seem
  Some spell of ancient miracles to keep:

As when against old Barbarossa's power
The Romans threw the grim rock of this tower.

More exquisite than our imagining,
  In silent hours how often shall arise—
From the dim waters of that mystic spring
  Where the soul keeps her anchored memories—
This world of beauty, color, and perfume;
Hoary with age, yet of unaging bloom.

WHEN YOU CAME

There were blossoms all unblown,
  They had known the rain so much;
There were angels in the stone
  Waiting for the master's touch;
Sweetest songs were still unsung,
Tenderest chords were left unstrung,
        When you came.

Summer sinks beneath the snow,
Pale grows every morning's glow;
Yet the wonder does not die
Of the dawn that flushed the sky
        When you came.

THE AGING GODS

Are these the glad young deities we knew
  Long, long ago in the world's dawning day—
  These pallid shapes that wander here astray
In the gray vapors and the glimmering dew?
  Where are the forms of satyr, nymph, and fay,
The flash of wings in the descending blue,
The wild enchantments that about us grew
  When first we heard the pipes of Pan aplay?

Sullied with time, its mildew and its moil,
  O gods immortal, crouching here so cold,
Age hath around you drawn her tightening coil,
  But we are young; the far quest finds us bold
For fresh endeavor and more glorious spoil.
  Alas! alas! how grew the gods so old?

HER DWELLING-PLACE

Amid the fairest things that grow
  My lady hath her dwelling-place;
Where runnels flow, and frail buds blow
  As shy and pallid as her face.

The wild, bright creatures of the wood
  About her fearless flit and spring;
To light her dusky solitude
  Comes April's earliest offering.

The calm Night from her urn of rest
  Pours downward an unbroken stream;
All day upon her mother's breast
  My lady lieth in a dream.

Love could not chill her low, soft bed
  With any sad memorial stone;
He put a red rose at her head—
  A flame as fragrant as his own.

ABSOLUTION

When the wonder so long hid
  Comes forth at a mighty will,
Shall the shreds of its chrysalid
  Cling to the spirit still?

PREVISION

Oh, days of beauty standing veiled apart,
  With dreamy skies and tender, tremulous air,
In this rich Indian summer of the heart
  Well may the earth her jewelled halo wear.

The long brown fields—no longer drear and dull—
  Burn with the glow of these deep-hearted hours.
Until the dry weeds seem more beautiful,
  More spiritlike than even summer's flowers.

But yesterday the world was stricken bare,
  Left old and dead in gray, enshrouding gloom;
To-day what vivid wonder of the air
  Awakes the soul of vanished light and bloom?

Sharp with the clean, fine ecstasy of death,
  A mightier wind shall strike the shrinking earth,
An exhalation of creative breath
  Wake the white wonder of the winter's birth.

In her wide Pantheon—her temple place—
  Wrapped in strange beauty and new comforting,
We shall not miss the Summer's full-blown grace,
  Nor hunger for the swift, exquisite Spring.

WE FORGET

So many tender words and true
We meant to say, dear love, to you;
So many things we meant to do,
But we forgot.

The busy days were full of care;
The long night fell all unaware;
You passed beyond love's pleading prayer,
While we forgot.

Now evermore through heart and brain
There breathes an undertone of pain.
Yet should what has been be again,
We must forget.

We feel, we know, that there must be
Beyond the veil of mystery
Some place where love can clearly see
And not forget.

SACRIFICE

When apple boughs are dim with bloom
  And lilacs blossom by the door,
How sweetly poignant the perfume
  From springs that are no more!

Strange how that faint, familiar scent
  Of early lilacs after rain
By subtle alchemy is blent
  With childhood's tenderest joy and pain.

Back through the long mists of the way
  Are weary mothers seen through tears;
They broke their lives from day to day
  To pour this fragrance down the years.

PLEDGES

I

The poppy leaf, the balm, the rue,
The dark flower of remembrance, too,
Are blended in this draught for you,
With all the grace of vanished years—
Their pain, their laughter, and their tears.

II

Ariel, Eros, brim for you
Chalices of silver dew,
With the moonlight smitten through;
Morning brings your trembling gleam,
Twilight lends your dusky dream.
All things mystical and fair
Of the earth and sea and air—

All the body's ripest flower,
All the spirit's richest dower,
Here are mingled—offered up
In love's fragile crystal cup.

A CHANT OF WEARINESS

I am weary:
Life is heavy with its sorrows long repressed;
I am weary;
Oh, beloved, thou canst calm me into rest,
For the star is on thy forehead while the thorn is in my breast.

I am weary:
Pain and pleasure, light and darkness seem the same;
I am weary;
Joyance flowered into fulness when you came
As the woodlands into leafage, as the blossoms into flame.

I am weary:
There's a shadow on the noontide and the dawn;

I am weary;
The long twilight, chill and desolate, draws on;
April bourgeons in its beauty in the land where
thou art gone.

I am weary:
Duty meets me with her disenchanting face;
I am weary;
Youth's ideals mock me with their blighted grace,
Lying broken, desolated, in the spirit's holiest place.

I am weary:
Faith's fruition cometh not to mortal sense;
I am weary;
Seeking vainly for love's perfect recompense.
Wilt thou call me? I will answer. I shall know
thee and go hence.

REFLEX

We see her flash across the fields—
  A glory on her waving hair.
Life's afternoon this sunshine yields,
  With morning's fleeting colors fair.

Her springtime beauty all aglow
  Makes bright our dim autumnal space.
O wintry winds, O rain and snow,
  You cannot touch this radiant place!

UNCALENDARED

Between us and the time of woe
There seems a century's sluggish flow;
Or was it but an hour ago—
So fresh are yet the stab and throe?

THE MASQUE OF SPRING

Spirit of Spring.
Where hast thou hidden away
All thy frail, glimmering tremulous things,
Far from the dull frozen glare of the day?
Dancing and singing in mystical rings,
Warm breathing under the sod,
Alive in the bare, budless rod—
Call them, O Spring!

Summon thy train—let us see
The dryad beloved of the tree,
The silver-tongued nymph of the stream,
Iris of many-hued dream;
Daphne, a pale laurel flame
Tinged with the glow of her shame;
Danaë high in her tower,
In the gold of a sunlighted shower.

Awaken the time of creation—
Of delicate, swift intimation.
Many a radiant being—
Too thin spun for hearing or seeing—
Many a dream-woven vision
Peoples the springtime elysian!

CONVALESCENT

Thou hast come back from deserts vast and wild,
  From twilight wanderings by a shadowy sea,
From the far glory of the Undefiled—
  Thou hast come back to home and love and me.

Though heavenly meadows stretched before thy gaze,
  Thick flecked with amaranth and asphodel;
Though angels tended thee, and all thy days
  Were palpitant with music as a bell,

Yet wouldst thou choose these low, cloud-shadowed skies—
  These tranquil hours with my hand in thine,
Gazing forever into answering eyes:
  What sphere could be thy heaven that was not mine?

UNGUARDED

The Mistress of the Roses
  Is haply far away,
And through her garden closes
  What strange intruders stray.

See on its rustic spindles
  The sundrop's amber fire!
And the goldenrod enkindles
  The embers on its spire.

The dodder's shining tangle
  From the meadow brook steals in,
Where in this shadowed angle
  The pale lace-makers spin.

Here's Black-Eyed Susan sweeping
  Into exotic air,
And Bouncing Bet comes creeping
  Back to her old parterre.

Now in this pleasant weather—
So sweetly reconciled—
They dwell and dream together,
The kin of court and wild.

THE HOUSE OF MEMORY

Within the House of Memory
  There many mansions be;
The great doors open sunnily
  Upon a faery lea,

Where, girt by strong, enchanted walls,
  The shining hours are long,
And twilight's dusky banner falls
  To strains of crooning song.

For royal carnival is dressed
  Aloft a roseate bower,
Where Joy abides, the high-born guest
  Of an entrancèd hour.

Within this House of Memory
  A mullioned window high
Looks out upon a boundless sea,
  A gray, unmeasured sky.

There is a chamber o'er the gate
  Where Love doth watch and weep:
A room there is, all desolate,
  Where those who wake not sleep.

Oh, long tides from that shoreless sea,
  So salt with unshed tears,
You fill the halls of memory
  With voices of dead years.

SPRING DAWN

How fair the lingering Northern spring
  That slowly lights from day to day
  Her dim green torches by the way!
    She stirs her low fire to a blaze
    Of violet, gold, and pale-rose rays;
Her white smoke curls with many a ring
  In wreathing clouds of orchard bloom;
  Her breath is faint with warm perfume.

Hers is the twilight of the year—
  The morning twilight, exquisite
  With dreamlike hues and shapes that flit
    Attuned to rhythmic ecstasy.
    Her beauty dawns so tenderly
We scarcely know that it is here
  Before it is the full-blown hour,
  With bough in leaf and bud in flower.

A MESSAGE

Upon your grave I leave these flowers of thought—
  Soft, purple-eyed, and pensive as the spring.
  This is the thrilling message that they bring:
Out of the dust what loveliness is wrought;
  Beauty from ashes, gold from sackcloth spun,
  From the long dark the wonder of the sun.
To your dear dust I bring these flowers of thought.

RE-CREATED

Lightly above a dreamless deep,
  O'er rosy billows of the morn,
Each day from the dim sea of sleep
  Love rises for us newly born.

THE GIFT OF IRIS

In gray old Venice, when fair Naples lay
  Watching the terror sent
From the dread peak across her lovely bay—
  Lightly the moments went.

Though her own crumbling destiny was writ
  In water long ago,
No shade of chilling prescience seemed to flit
  Across San Marco's glow.

More deadly yet on rapt Sicilian vales
  The fiery rain descends,
But with the pity of unnumbered wails
  A chant of courage blends.

Beauty from ashes shall arise again,
  A winged and joyous thing.
The living remnant of unconquered men
  To Fate their challenge fling.

This gift of gladness is our heritage;
  Life, too, rejects its doom;
Youth doubts the sad decrepitude of age—
  Age disbelieves the tomb.

From flame and earthquake comes a thrilling voice
  To those who listen long;
Some strong evangel bids the earth rejoice
  And hearken to his song.

AN INLAND SEA

Across the meadow's rippling sea
  The dandelion spray is blown;
Above the green waves joyously
  The daisies' foam-white crests are thrown.

The buttercups' sunlighted surge
  Against the flags' deep azure breaks;
And on that far-off shimmering verge
  Life—or its fantasy—awakes.

When on this inland ocean scene
  The earliest rays of morning glance,
In the cool deeps do gods marine
  And gold-haired mermaids laugh and dance?

TRANSMUTATION

May not that world for which life's joys have died
Yield to our dreams fulfilment glorified
When, through God's miracle, this earth of ours
Sees its dull vapors given back in flowers?

THE INNOCENT

Through sunlit days she sits and sings
  From earliest dawn to eventide;
Her spirit's sweet but ruined strings
  Thrill to the light and naught beside.
The falling night, the storm and rain,
'Tis only these that bring her pain.

For then her reason flutters out—
  She shrinks, and fears the baffled thing
That beats so helplessly about
  With blinded eye and broken wing.
Could one but still that piteous sound
And cure the maiden's cureless wound!

Is hers a finer sense than ours—
  Attuned to some more rhythmic sphere?

Since even in the time of flowers
  She seems a saddened exile here;
So alien, vague, and out of place—
A moon adrift in noonday space.

SEPTEMBER WAYS

The first red leaves have blazed the way
  Of autumn through the wood;
The white and purple asters sway
  Where daisies lately stood.

Though many a blossom grows less bright,
  The earth is all agleam
With golden flames upon the height,
  Red torches by the stream.

Troops of small butterflies are out—
  Gold-colored, white, and brown—
Pale moths are fluttering all about
  On wings of rose-hued down.

Tall clovers, faintly blooming here,
  Have lost their lure, for, see,
Upon the thistle's purpling sphere
  A frowsy, fumbling bee!

A dandelion flashes up
  Its sunshine as you pass;
The glimmer of a buttercup
  Is in the faded grass.

So—tenderly as life descends
  Into its wintry way—
The charm of spring and summer blends
  With that of autumn's day.

REVENANTS

From dim wild-carrots' shrunken lace
  The deep, green nests are forming,
And all about this wayside place
  Small butterflies are swarming;

Such fluttering, thin-winged, Psyche things—
  Lost in this shimmering ocean—
Wraiths of the world's forgotten springs,
  Attuned to rhythmic motion.

KINSHIP

"Heir of an ancient, kingly line"—
  Or so they said to me—
"Sealed with that mystical high sign,
  You dare not recreant be."

In youth I pledged my fealty
  To each renowned forebear,
Who with his sacrifices free
  Enriched me unaware.

And oftentimes I feel the stir
  Of some remoter claim,
When whispers thin as gossamer
  Seem vibrant with my name.

"Oh, will you go a-gypsying?"
  The wandering voices say—
"The dancing spirits of the spring
  Are with us but a day.

"Come out! Come out! The summer flings
  Her radiance over all;
We'll find for you her secret springs;
  Come learn their silver call."

What wealth was scattered at the feet
  Of an impoverished child,
What influence wooed her strangely sweet
  To kingdoms of the wild!

Some day—so strong the instinct lives—
  I shall fare forth, I know,
To dwell with my rich relatives,
  My kin of long ago.

THE IMPRISONED VOICE

Tender and clear as a flute,
  Held in this circular shell
Slumbers a voice that is mute;
  Science has guarded it well.

Science—what can she not do?
  Here is the image she wrought;
Here is the tender and true
  Smile the swift camera caught.

This, too, alas! is in vain,
  Yet not the eye, but the ear
Brings its sharp message of pain
  To the hurt spirit more near.

Sleep, then, in silence apart,
  Echoes more soft than a bell,
Since but this pang of the heart
  Answers to all you might tell.

THE NEW OLD WORLD

In the close, crowded ways of life
  How beauty has been thrust aside!
And in the fever of the strife
  The gods have been so long denied;
So long denied, yet waiting long,
  Above the tumult, over all—
Notes of a half-forgotten song—
  We hear their far, insistent call,
And, muffling the loud market-bell,
We go where softer echoes swell.

Here are the gods, yet how estranged
  From the clear likeness of the Greek!
Into our latest image changed—
  They wear our garb, our language speak;
They roam our fields, gaze in our streams,
  Seek warmer friendliness with men.

The thin-worn shapes of ancient dreams
  Are re-created all again;
Yet for the souls that listen long
The new gods sing the old gods' song.

HEART AND SOUL

The heart is a tender woman,
  Warm with the dew and wine
Of a passion wholly human
  And a pity all divine.

Sweet is her breath as the flowers
  In the sheltered nook and vale;
Her hearth flame lights the hours
  When skies are wintry pale.

But the soul is a spirit lonely
  That burns with a flame unfed
On the still, white heights that are only
  Rose red when the sun is red.

Some who hear her may never
  To her star-cold mountains go,
But her far voice calls forever
  To those in the vales below.

UNWEDDED

Along her tranquil way she went,
  The slow, sad course of changeless years,
While in her burned her youth unspent,
  Dulled sometimes by her gentle tears.

In richer lives she saw the strange,
  Sweet urgency of wedded days.
In dreams she watched her pale light change
  Into the steadfast altar blaze.

And, waking, sadly bowed above
  Her slender vestal flame and wept.
Ah, better were the house of love,
  By blighting fire and tempest swept.

THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS

A very long, long time ago
  There was a cherry-tree,
Just full of flowers as white as snow;
And little children in a row
  Came there to play with me.

All through the winter cold and long
  I had to stay alone,
But when I heard the robin's song
I knew he'd tell the pretty throng
  That the old tree had blown.

And then my playmates kind and fair
  Would gather in a ring;
They had the forms dream-children wear.
And just their clouds of shining hair—
  And, oh, they used to bring

Things that I never saw before.
  I saw the far-off sea;
Strange people walked right in our door,
And the blue heaven's shifting floor
  Seemed to come down to me.

I wonder where the children are,
  They didn't come this year.
The cherry blooms are scattered far,
But when I watch the first white star
  My playmates seem so near.

THE HOUSE OF SONG

The winds of Chance, the blasts of Fate
  May smite the singing, flame-robed throng,
But, throned in immemorial state,
  Secure shall stand the House of Song.

NOVEMBER

Lo, what wild enchanter passes,
  Hearken, people, and give heed;
There is glory in the grasses,
  There is wonder in the weed.

Every little bush is burning,
  With a presence great and strange,
But the eastern looms are turning
  Slowly for a subtle change.

When this world of splendid seeming
  Shall grow yet more deeply fair,
Harmonies beyond our dreaming
  Softly limned on earth and air.

There's a beauty in November
  That no brush nor pen may paint—
Softened flame and mist-veiled ember,
  Charm of exquisite restraint.

RUSSIA

1900

A flash of streamlets in their elfin play;
  A golden glint of minaret and dome;
  A sea-blue sky, its still waves flecked with foam;
Far-sweeping steppes with flowers and grasses gay.
In winds and waters hear Spring's thrilling song—
  Her choral chant, her pæan of release!
To earth and hearts, with cold oppressed so long,
  Come warmth and vibrancy and pain's surcease;
While above all, clear ringing, sweet and strong,
  Resounds the plea for universal peace.

1905

How strange the scene beneath the patient sky!
  A barren world with endless wastes of snow,
  Like a pale ocean with no ebb and flow,
No opalescence to entrance the eye.

And over all what silence casts its spell—
  Born of the mute and motionless great plain!
But hark! As with the sharp stroke of a knell,
  The listening solitude is cleft in twain;
We hear the cry of outraged souls that tell
  This weary mother of her children slain.

FOREST FIRES

The moon in a murky shroud,
  The great sun strangely bright;
By day a burning cloud,
  A pillared fire by night;
And people fly from the wrath
That follows their ashen path.

The beautiful hills are swept—
  The fields of ripened corn,
And the forests that have kept
  Their mystery ancient born;
Their temple's irised veil
Is rent by a mighty wail.

From the valleys cool with streams,
  From the heart of the mountain glen,

From the fanes that arose from dreams,
  And the altars built by men,
The arid mists that rise
Are the smoke of sacrifice.

THE WIND OF DREAMS

That was the heart of the dream,
  Deep in the virginal wood,
Where, by the mirroring stream,
  Shyly the birches stood.

It was long and long ago
  And far—so far—away;
Over the lost dream's glow
  The dust of the years is gray.

Over the face like a rose
  The fluttering leaves are sere;
But sweet is the wind that blows
  From the June of that vanished year.

AN OLD-FASHIONED POET

In simpler verse than triolets,
  Rondeau, or deft quatrain,
With breath of morning violets
  In every dewy strain,
He sang from overflowing heart
His sweet old songs unspoiled by art.

Progressive years have passed since then—
  The Muse has changed her ways;
No more through flowery mead and glen
  A rustic maid she strays;
Amid the traffic of the town
We catch the flutter of her gown.

But one who knows her virgin grace
  Gives back the songs she sung

And brings with glimpses of her face
  The days when love was young.
O Muse immortal, singer true,
What harmonies unite the two!

HALLOWE'EN

A gypsy flame is on the hearth,
Sign of this carnival of mirth.
Through the dun fields and from the glade
Flash merry folk in masquerade—
  It is the witching Hallowe'en.

Pale tapers glimmer in the sky,
The dead and dying leaves go by;
Dimly across the faded green
Strange shadows, stranger shades, are seen—
  It is the mystic Hallowe'en.

Soft gusts of love and memory
Beat at the heart reproachfully;
The lights that burn for those who die
Were flickering low, let them flare high—
  It is the haunting Hallowe'en.

SURSUM

From its own self Faith spins a shining thread
That hovers o'er the dim realms of the dead;
The cobweb trembles, yet to heaven it bears
A sad world's weight of longing, pain, and prayers.

THE THINGS WE MEANT TO DO

When at some mystical behest
  Life clasped us in its first embrace,
And with a blind but growing zest
  We learned the strange earth face to face;
  Through Orient clouds we loved to trace
A shining pathway in the blue,
  Where gods inspired our eager chase
To do the things we meant to do.

At noontide, on the sunlit crest,
  The zenith glow subdues our pace;
Yet still that vision of the best
  Blots out the petty things and base.
  The hurrying byways interlace,
Pale, broken dreams the wayside strew;
  Too swift the hours, too strait our case,
To do the things we meant to do.

The shadowy islands of the west
  Are rich with day's declining grace;
They proffer us the cup of rest—
  The guerdon of a hard-won race.
  There is no lovelier dreaming-place,
And yet our restless souls would sue.
  Grant us, O gods, a little space
To do the things we meant to do!

WEEDS

Obscure wild growths of summer's hour,
  Your stems have lengthened toward the sun,
With peasant weed and royal flower
  So is it when their day is done.

From sun and wind, from rain and dew,
  From homely virtues of the sod,
The measure of sweet life you drew,
  And now you lift your face to God,

Secure that He shall make you fair—
  For what ethereal shapes are made
When trembles in the snowy air
  The lowly weed's transfigured shade!

Something from faery gardens lost
  The pale fire of a mystic bloom,
The weaver of the snow and frost
  Shall bring with raiment from his loom.

THE SUNLIT WAY

Into that echoless deep
  That must engulf us all,
Through the wan mists of sleep
  We pass beyond recall.

Love will not have it so—
  For me the sun is bright,
And where thou art I know
  That there must still be light.

Not love without alloy,
  Not bliss without an ill,
But the warm pulse of joy,
  New life's exultant thrill.

And so the dawning day
  No longer makes me sad;
I go my peaceful way,
  Content that thou art glad.

TWILIGHT

A little longer let the dream beguile
That we abide in youth's entrancing smile.
These lingering buds a vernal promise show,
Though pale rose-petals drift like flakes of snow;
The air is thin and keen with frost—but still
Spring's freshest morn has oft the selfsame chill.

The sky is dark and shines with many a star—
Has dawn not stars? The night must yet be far.
Which is this twilight—that of age or youth?
Since each resembles each so much, forsooth,
One scarce can tell if youth's bright day be gone
Or just awakening to its April dawn.

THE FLAMING HOURS

When woodland ways
Are all ablaze
The Autumn spreads her cloth of gold
On tangled hedge and briery wold.

Her spears are golden on the height,
Her torches burn with ruddy light;
On ironweed and thistle crown
She flings the purple of renown
When woodland ways
Are all ablaze.

INSCRIPTION FOR A MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

When at this ıountain poor mute creatures slake
  Their burning thirst, and men pause gratefully,
Gentlest of hearts, may these cool waters make
  More glad thy draught of immortality!

THE DOOR OF BREAD

Stately and fair, with spires and pillars gleaming,
  The great cathedral grew
Into the vision that the master's dreaming,
  Art-quickened spirit knew.

There seemed no beauty that the utmost longing
  Found unfulfilled;
But one whose soul all white-stoled thoughts were
      thronging
  Spake what God willed:

"Here in this temple raised to Heaven's glory
  Worship and service wed,
As in a niche amid the shadows hoary
  We build a Door of Bread."

Through the long years how many heavy hearted
  Have blessed that gracious dole!

Received the loaf and gratefully departed
  To feed some hungrier soul!

In the vast temple of our earth's rejoicing,
  With fair shrines for the dead,
And heavenly music each pure passion voicing,
  Have we no Door of Bread?

ACCORD

The cosmos thrills to the pulse of the winds,
  The flower is swayed by a force afar,
Stranger still is the spell that binds
  Spirit to spirit as star to star.
  In the rhythmic course of the systems, dear,
  I shall feel your touch—I shall know you near.

THE ATTIC

High over the clamor and riot
  We store the things that pass
In a great room dim and quiet—
  Flower images under a glass;

Hopes long used and broken,
  Dreams that have lost their wings,
Sweet words softly spoken,
  And priceless unuttered things.

No one would care to rifle
  This chamber up in the air,
Where many a battered trifle
  Is shrined with sacred care.

There dusty heaps are hidden
  In shadowy corners tossed,
And queer shapes rise unbidden,
  For nothing is wholly lost.

When the house of life is stilly
  We creep up the strange old stair;
Where the echoing dusk is chilly
  And the silence seems a prayer.

And there when the rain is falling
  Or the weirdly drifting snow
On the winds are voices calling
  From haunts of the long ago.

QUESTIONINGS

There shall be a white world, fair shriven of this,
  Beauty new born and freshly blown delight—
  But, oh, the tender voices in the night,
The velvet flutter of your child's first kiss!

Shall these be swept relentlessly aside
  On the dark waters of forgotten things,
  Or shall the old dreams, with far-cleaving wings,
Rise, starry eyed, above the drowning tide?

THE ONE WHO STAYED

I met a woman old and gray
And sought to sheer her lonely way.

A girl flashed by us, all aglow;
"Your child?" I said; she answered, "No,

"I have but one, and she is dead,
Yet seven others live," she said;

"Live, but we live so far apart
I hold them only in my heart;

"But one who has no dwelling-place
In earthly time or earthly space,

"She nestles in my arms at night,
She greets me when the morn is bright;

"Her baby smile, her winsome ways
Make glad my bleak November days."

She looked across the waters gray,
Then pressed my hand and turned away.

JOYS OF AUTUMN

Fair as a woman's face
  That has lost its summer glow,
And waits for its crowning grace,
  Its coronal of snow,

The autumn lies serene,
  In the light of her waning sun,
A beautiful, patient queen
  Whose golden reign is done.

Who says that the joy of earth
  Is spent or is running low,
When the clean, free winds have birth,
  And the long, clear sunsets glow?

When out of the frozen sleep
  Of a strange world, pale and new,
The wonderful dawnings sweep—
  Amber and pearl and blue?

There's a silver sphere in the east,
  A golden globe in the west;
The bird songs all have ceased.
  But the song of the hearth is best.

MATER DOLOROSA

Mother of sorrows, though you never wore
  The sacred halo and supreme renown,
Through what long years of agony you bore
  Pain's fiery wreath and grief's immortal crown!

Your soul attuned to finest harmonies,
  How smitten by the discords of the world—
  How on the torrent and the tempest whirled,
The heart that dwelt with love's soft ecstasies!

Is it a dream that brings through the deep night
  This tender warmth, this singing from afar,
  And on the clear rays of your happy star
One little flame to set my torch alight,
  Showing the islands where the blessed are,
With you, beloved, rose-crowned, upon a height?

THE FAR LIGHT

There is a light that shines afar
  For every earnest soul
Though thine be not my guiding star
  And mine be not thy goal.

Yet a like heavenly wonder lies—
  A rapture unconfessed—
The primal glow of paradise,
  Secure in every breast.

When backward to the dawn we turn
  The same far splendors shine
Where morning's earliest torches burn
  As where the fires decline.

BOURGEONING

No tiny crumpled leaf is seen,
  But the red haws shrivel and fall
Where the rosa rugosa's wands are green
  On the garden's crumbling wall.

Their tender yellows the willows show
  By the slow stream far away;
The swelling buds of the maples glow
  With a rosier flush each day.

Soon shall the dreaming April wake
  At the silver call of her name,
And the reddening mists of the long woods break
  Into waves of emerald flame.

THE GREAT BIRTHDAY

The day goes by with laughter, dance, and song,
With gilded baubles twinkling in the light;
Wild sounds ring out upon the trembling air,
Bright smiles are glittering on the foam of speech.
The world is mad with gayety—not joy,
Pleased with its pomp of gaudy circumstance;
But far above the gorgeous festival
And all the clamor of its painted show
We trace the outline of a shadowy form
Clasping the Christ Child in her tender arms;
What wondering pity in their steadfast eyes
Whose gaze is fixed upon this fading scene
And on the passing sorrows of our world!
High over all the eternal star shines down
Deepening the shadows of the mystic Cross.

TEST

"Look in my eyes," he said, "my own!"
  She looked; her eyes dropped low—
Sweet Juno lids, to violets grown
  A hundred years ago.

And here to-day the blithe Lizette
  In challenge lifts her eyes;
They fall—love's spell is potent yet
  Through all the gay disguise!

THE BRIDE

With sacred thrills of wedded bliss
Our lips have met in many a kiss.
As happy stars in music move
Our lives glide by, and yet, dear love,
I grieve because you may not know
My spirit's subtlest ebb and flow.

The soul is veilèd as a bride;
Could I but tear that veil aside—
Revealing all the strange desires,
The ashes and the hidden fires—
Would you so love? Ah, who may know?
Yet oft I wish it might be so.

Sometimes when by your side I dream—
So variant from the thing I seem—
Could you but pierce with spirit eye
My soul's remotest mystery!

But no, a shadow thin and pale
Between us hangs its baffling veil.

As children with impatient heart
Will pull the slow, sweet flowers apart,
We long sometimes to tear away
The calyxes of time and clay;
But Love awaits his full-blown hour,
The trance of light, the crowning flower.

IN AUTUMN DAYS

The winds are crisp and merry,
  The air is a haze of light,
The creeper's purple berry
  Shines on its foliage bright.

The goldenrod grows duller,
  The asters are small and dim;
But the woods are a surge of color
  To the blue horizon rim.

There are crimson wines and golden
  Splashed over these autumn ways—
A vintage rich and olden
  From the wild, red Pagan days.

WHEN LOVE IS BEST

Is love not best when from the snows
The fairy shape of springtime grows,
  When mating birds and budding spray
  Foretell the miracle of May,
When whitely every hedgerow blows?

Or when heaven's sweetness overflows
The bosom of the wayside rose,
  And summer sets her pipes aplay,
        Is love not best?

Is it the best when the world glows
With the rich hues that autumn shows?
  Nay, coming in its own sweet way—
  At any season, hour, or day—
The heart by fullest rapture knows
        When love is best!

OUR LIFE

At the feet of the Father of all
  Some day we shall lay our gift,
Time-stained, pitiful, small,
  Heavy and hard to lift.

Fettered and bowed by Fate—
  Since Destiny makes or mars—
Nay, winged with strength elate,
  Handed down from the stars.

Free as the infinite air,
  Wide as the boundless sky;
We have sought to keep it fair,
  We have tried to hold it high.

Father of all, when we come
  Bringing Thy dust to Thee,
Wilt Thy voice of peace be dumb,
  Thy passion drowned in the sea?

Wilt Thou pity the gift we lay,
  Clasping warm to Thy breast
The image of flame and clay
  Rendered at Thy behest?

RENEWAL

Amid a world of toil and stress
  There flashes on our sight
A maid of mortal loveliness,
  Clothed in immortal light.

Her wand of flickering silver gleams;
  We follow where she goes
To a cool place of fragrant dreams—
  The palm, the stream, the rose.

Clear joyance as a river rolls
  Between her land and this;
God's pity on those arid souls
  Who such renewal miss.

THE LOCUST

High in the tree-tops all day long
  A cruel knight in coat of mail,
  His sword turned to a brazen flail,
Is threshing out his fiery song.

The thirsting monody intrudes
  Upon the songsters small and shy,
  In thickets cool and fields near by,
And drinks their dewy interludes.

Deep in the night the arid strain
  Smites hotly on the wakeful ear,
  And in its dizzy chime we hear
A withering note, "No rain—no rain."

ANTIQUES

What is to be will be; if true
Or false this is none ever knew.

What has been will be; this we know;
Old as the earth are joy and woe.

Each life repeateth line by line
An ancient, intricate design;

Its lightest smile, its tear and sigh
Were wrought in æons long gone by.

When love and joy and anguish come,
As something new they strike us dumb,

Though as a part of the great plan
Are all not older far than man?

Can clay evade the power that binds
It to the potter's wheel and grinds

From the same stuff a vessel base
Or sculptured urn or storied vase?

When the great weaver's shuttle flies
Can crossing threads and mingling dyes

Say, "I will keep unto my own,
My hue and fabric stand alone?"

JULIA WARD HOWE

(Lines suggested by the election of Mrs. Howe to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters—the first woman thus honored.)

Swaying a sceptre viewless but sublime,
  Crowned with the silver honor of her hair,
  She sits imperial in a throne-like chair,
Facing pale death, yet still defying time.
Old England's Queen, enshrined in sunset air,
  Sat thus for Constant in her waning prime—
  Strong Queen of Letters in our younger clime,
What painter's art shall seize you unaware?
Yours is the ampler heritage of thought,
  The unhorizoned kingdom of the mind,
From whose deep treasuries your touch has wrought
  Enrichment for remotest humankind.
Our master craftsmen reverently have brought
  Their eager bays your brow serene to bind.

SPRING SONG

Oh, to be, to be
A glad, green tree,
With the wind through its branches blowing,
And the fragrant wine
Of a youth divine
From root to crown overflowing!

When the primal dawn
Of the earth drew on
There sprang from the world's gray nether
An elm and an oak—
With one pulse they woke
And mingled their songs together.

Do you hear the sigh
When the spring is nigh?

O love, when the days grow longer
Does the fiery thrill
Of the old life still
Make the new, sweet bond seem stronger?

CONQUEST

His love was sheltering, warm, and sweet,
  Yet her soft eyes grew dim with tears;
She felt the rains of sorrow beat
  Upon a lonely waste of years.
"How can I bear the days," she said,
"When I am old and he is dead?"

But lo! a sharp turn in the way,
  A freshening breeze, a clearing sky;
To-morrow is as yesterday
  When hearts are young and hopes are high.
Through ways unshadowed by the dread
They walk together, comforted.

IDENTITY

Can each wave of an infinite ocean
  Its sparkling identity keep?
In the play of its own blind emotion
  It loses itself in the deep.

It is lost in the tumult of waters,
  Yet is glad of the wind and the sun;
Old Earth, must thy sons and thy daughters
  Be merged as this many in one?

THE SINGER OF THE SEA

(Algernon Charles Swinburne. April 10, 1909)

Oh, England, to your dim aisles of the dead,
  Your sculptured charnel-house of stateliest clay,
  Doom not this dust that leaped to meet the day,
Smitten to music by the sun-rays red;
Nor in some ancient churchyard's mouldering bed—
  Where cold mortality holds ghostly sway
  Even above the jubilance of May—
Leave you his singing shade disquieted.

But give him to the sea. Her purple sleep
  Shall calm his eyelids for a dreaming space,
Within some wreathing fastness of the deep.
  Then he shall waken to that strong embrace,
And give us back, in ocean's choric sweep,
  Rich Viking songs from his new dwelling-place.

INTIMATIONS

Stand not between us and the sun,
  Oh, darkly brooding shadow, Care;
For in still hours we come upon
      A glory unaware.

All day above our tent's low roof
  What radiant pageantries go by—
The wonders of a world aloof,
      Processions of the sky!

And sometimes through a little rift
  The stars shine down, the sun-rays creep,
Or wandering gleams of heaven drift
      Through broken veils of sleep.

HER SPRINGTIME

In a sheltered niche in Evergreen Hedge
  In the narrow street is her dwelling-place—
Thrust angle-wise, a sunny wedge,
  To whose green and bloom God lends His grace.
    Slowly about her and silently
    Has gathered a gentle company.

Dear little maid, in some lost dream sphere
  Warm and close in my heart she grew,
But the drifting years have left her here
  In this shadowy isle of peace and dew;
    Over that small rose face of hers
    With silken whispers the young grass stirs.

Swift little butterflies flit about—
  White as her spirit's wandering star—

The frail spring blossoms just coming out
Seem faint and sweet as her footprints are;
And these airs are a message softly blown
From her April life and her fair new zone.

BUT YESTERDAY

But yesterday the hedges showed
  The purpling promise of the spring;
Though bare and brown, the woodlands glowed
  With hidden wine of comforting.

To-day the flush, the charm is gone,
  How bleak the prospect everywhere!
The soul of light has been withdrawn—
  The miracle of sunlit air.

RENASCENCE

White are the ashes of old faiths' dead fruit:
  The tree is withered, and the heedless throng
  Has trampled down the fallen leafage long,
Yet mightier growths shall blossom from the root.
O master of the clarion and the lute,
  The soft-voiced madrigal and battle-song—
  With one clear blast, imperious and strong,
Arouse the spirit, dormant now and mute!

Again the east burns with prophetic fire:
  Lone watchers on the soul's high tower may see
The beauty of strange visions, the desire
  Of the deep earth since it began to be,
And catch the strains of pagan flute and lyre
  Exalted to a finer ecstasy.

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LONGING

I cannot reach across time's gulf and say
Love, thou wast here a year ago to-day;
Nor cheat my sorrow with the sweet pretence
That thou wilt surely come a twelvemonth hence.

Oh, hast thou gone so far, so far away
Our mighty sun no longer marks thy day?
Art thou still near, impalpable in space,
Or is my heart thy last lone dwelling-place?

Vain queries! Yet they beat the hollow air
Till the brain aches with their unanswered prayer.
Vain hopes, vain dreams—or is it all in vain,
Life's rare delights, its passion and its pain?

THE UNRETURNING

She loves the eager leaves of spring,
  The singing summer leaves,
And when she sees them vanishing,
  How wistfully she grieves!

"But they will come again, you say?"—
  "These leaves—the very same?"
Dear child, what joy, what azure day,
  Relights its wonder flame?

GREETING

"Say not good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good-morning."

You who so loved to watch the changing sky,
  To follow the soft curves where beauty led,
You scarcely dared to claim the grace to die,
  Yet went your way not all uncomforted;

For through the dark the wingèd visions came,
  Smiting the fine, tense harpstrings of your
    soul.
One weary night upon a singing flame
  You passed beyond each petty care's control.

You did the things you did not like to do,
  Made day by day the thankless sacrifice,
And so, dear heart, I love to think of you
  Deep bosomed in your restful paradise.

Watching clear spaces of the hours drift by
  To vibrant measures of some new delight—
And yet we pitied you that you must die
  And leave your urgent day, your broken night.

TOPAZ DAYS

Fair topaz days, the last
  Pale, quivering jewelled fire
From thin-leafed tree-tops cast
  Into the autumn's pyre.

The birthstone on her breast,
  With its wavering yellow gleam,
Is one with the maple's crest
  And the sunset on the stream.

Soft are the autumn rays
  Of your natal gem, my own;
In your round of precious days
  Is another sunlit stone.

THE NATIVITY

A picture strange and far away,
  The raftered loft, the great-eyed kine,
  The Mother and the Babe Divine—
How clear it seems this Christmas Day!

The long gaze of the heavenly Child,
  The deep smile of the haloed Maid,
  The wondering oxen unafraid—
What homely balm for passions wild!

One with the dews, the stars, the wind;
  So close to Nature's breathing heart,
  So simple this tremendous part
In the great play of humankind.

We shout to bid the tumult cease,
  Our struggles bind, not set us free;
  Soft is the spell of mastery,
Small is the voice that whispers peace.

AUTUMN

The dandelions that made glad the spring
  Return to brighten autumn's dimmer way;
Queen Anne's shrunk laces to their thin stems cling,
  Pale yellow butterflies about them stray.

Above the spent flame of the goldenrod
  The smouldering embers of the sumac burn,
And flakes of fire upon the ashen sod
  Mark where the leaves to native dust return.

A tremulous light the smoky ether fills,
  As from a censer silver wreaths arise;
Above the altar of the turquoise hills
  Ascend strange shapes in mists of sacrifice.

Pile high the pyre, the flaming faggots bring,
  To one vast urn the shining dust consign!

The gentle wraiths of summer-time and spring
  Shall hover near, invoking powers benign.

While ancient spirits hidden in the tree,
  Waiting the touch that breaks the silent spell,
Guard even now the tender mystery
  Of leaf and bloom, spring's folded miracle.

AN INVITATION

O dwellers in the stony ways,
  Hard fettered to the street,
Come out and hear the song of praise
  The lightsome days repeat.

"Come out! Come out!" the waters shout,
  White in the darkling glen,
This loveliness spread all about
  Should thrill the hearts of men;

For beauty dwells not in the sky,
  The earth, the wave, the air;
Her shrine is in the seeing eye,
  That finds her everywhere.

THE OTHER BOY

Whenever I see you, little lad,
  At your earnest work or your eager play
My heart grows warm with the memory glad
  Of a little boy who is far away.

He was just your age, he was just your size,
  He was quite as tender and quite as brave,
But the shining flame in your childish eyes
  In his is growing a trifle grave.

Over the blossoms sweet and low,
  Over the stones and the briers too,
Through ways where the tenderest feet must go,
  I followed him, as he follows you.

It may be only a fancy, dear,
  And yet in our twilight hour of play
I often feel that he still is here—
  The little boy who is far away.

VARIATIONS

There is a glow
Upon the snow
Of roses buried long ago.
White roses bloom in bower and glen—
The buried snowflakes rise again.

The fiery dust of the roses,
  Sepulchred long ago,
Quivers and leaps in the sunset
  Over the drifts of snow.
And the souls of the buried snowflakes—
  Are they loosed in the soft airs when
The white rose strews its petals,
  Snow upon snow again?

REVEILLE

Silent is Ida, with great Jove asleep;
  No more a garlanded, soft-footed throng
  Thrills the wild aisles with laughter, dance, and
    song;
Naiad and faun their dreaming vigils keep.
Dried are thy dews, Olympus; dust is deep
  On Enna's fields, and where the gods so long
  Held their young sway—how jubilant and strong!
Vague shapes and ghostly, alien shadows creep.

The deities have slumbered long, yet still
  Their old power holds us in compelling thrall.
For hearken well! From some far Delphic hill
  Floats a faint strain, a reedy, flute-like call,
Breathing upon the pulseless world until
  A radiant fantasy repeoples all.

THE SUMMONS

One whose time was spent—
  As the shadow flickered o'er him,
From the clefts where it is pent—
  Summoned the Sphinx before him.

"Intimate pulse of my heart—
  Nearer than child or wife—
Now that our ways must part,
  What can you do for me, Life?

"What are the things you have done?
  You cast me out on the sands,
Meshed in a blind web spun
  By dead, unthinking hands.

"Fettered here in the dark—
  Yet drawn to the spheres afar:
You give us the glow-worm's spark
  And mock us with the star.

"You take the rose of love
  And crush it in your hand;
In hard, cold ways you move—
  We cannot understand.

"To our last dim lurking-place
  You bring the spoiler Death."
Over the Sphinx's face
  Fluttered a smile's wan breath.

SPINNERS

The shimmering leafage of a vanished day
Enwraps the silkworm in its cocoon gray;
So 'round life's twilight Memory hath spun
A tissue rainbowed by the morning sun.

WHEN APRIL COMES

When April comes, how tenderly
The love light falls on earth and sea!
  How soft the flush of budding things,
  How light the bluebird's flashing wings,
How freshly green the sunlit lea!

Sweet sounds of lightsome revelry
Float from the stream and young-leafed tree;
  Joy flows from her long-prisoned springs
        When April comes.

Before the sprites of tearful glee
The pallid shapes of winter flee;
  The springtime spirit laughs and sings
  And softly sweeps her trembling strings.
The world is new for you and me
        When April comes.

BELLS OF SLEEP

You heard the bells of New Year ring,
Lost in a tender caroling
  That softly lulled to rest,
And left you, from your hard day spent,
Wrapt in ineffable content
  Upon the mother's breast.

To us—who cannot hear the song—
Somehow the hours seem strangely long,
  Sadly awaiting here
That merry evening when we feign
The king turns back with all his train
  Of Christmas glee and cheer.

Our little gifts are set apart
To wait your coming home, dear heart;

We see your calm face shine.
Though long we look for your return,
How clear and white the lights shall burn
Upon Love's sheltered shrine!

THE FULL-BLOWN YEAR

A wintry breath the dawning cools,
  The fields are white with frosted dew;
Thin, crackled ice is on the pools,
  With tiny spears of grass shot through.

Deep-breathed the morning's clear delight,
  The noon is steeped in amber balm;
The vapor shimmering on the height
  Dissolves in evening's crystal calm.

O Autumn—many-colored bloom,
  More richly hued from day to day—
In blinding mist, in storm and gloom,
  Must all your petals fall away?

THE SOUL WEIGHER

Who'll bridge the sweetbrier's drop of dew?
Who'll analyze the ether blue?

Who'll tell the beads of trembling light
On wastes of flowers this summer night?

Who'll find the rainbow's misty source?
Who'll follow comets in their course?

Who'll mount on rays from yon pale moon,
And pluck from spheres their silver tune?

He who would probe the throbbing cells
Where life's inviolate mystery dwells.

IN DAISIED JUNE

When fields are white with daisied June,
  O poet of the rustic rhyme,
Your oaten reed should be in tune,

And you should trill your blithest rune
  For rapture of this rhythmic time,
When fields are white with daisied June.

With liquid silver of the moon,
  With every brooklet's rippling chime,
You oaten reed should be in tune.

You feel the year's expanding noon,
  With her aspiring hours you climb,
When fields are white with daisied June.

To murmuring cadences that croon,
  To swelling organ strains sublime,
Your oaten reed should be in tune.

Now all the ways are blossom-strewn
  In summer's rare, gold-hearted prime.
Your oaten reed should be in tune
When fields are white with daisied June.

RESPONSIVE

No rare creative inspirations throng
  My quiet spirit, silent, sad, and lone;
  No Sapphic flame hath on its altar shone;
No music to my nature doth belong.
  Thou art the sunlight, I am Memnon's stone;
Thou art the zephyr, I give back its song;
The harp Æolian can do no wrong
  To the soft airs which wake an answering tone.

Upon my soul, oh, then, breathe tenderly;
  Subdue the discord, still the jarring strain;
So may the harp-strings yield but melody.
  If notes discordant give thy keen ear pain,
Set the fine chords again to harmony;
  Let but sweet echoes of thyself remain.

WHY?

They sat in the church together
  As the sweet bells ceased to chime—
One in life's frosty weather,
  One in its April prime.

Wrinkled and bent and faded
  With the sorrowful stress of years
Was the one whose white hair shaded
  Sad eyes half dimmed by tears.

But oh, that face of the morning—
  That radiant heart aglow!
O youth with thy joyous scorning
  Of a blight thou shalt not know!

Again is the old pew holding
  The woman; her heart is cold,
With all its warmth enfolding
  The young face under the mould.

SPRING MAGIC

From the brown and briery hedges,
From the gleaming silvery sedges,
  Bleached by many a wintry moon;
From the sodden, trodden grasses
Something whispers as it passes,
  "Spring is coming, coming soon."

Coming not in this pale seeming,
But with all her colors streaming,
  Her wild music in the air;
She will wreathe the tangled byway,
Flush with light the common highway,
  Spill her magic everywhere.

Idle fancies sternly banished,
Dreams and visions long, long vanished

Stir the soul to sweet unrest.
In an oubliette sinks Duty,
While old unforgotten Beauty
Lures us on her ancient quest.

IN THE SHADOW

Could I have shielded thee against time's fret,
  Placing my heart between thee and all ill,
  Life's jars and strain and the deep thrusts that
    kill
With sudden grief, I might have kept thee yet;
With soft allurements bidding thee forget
  That alien joy seeks exile at her will,
  While woe—earth's native—lingers with us still:
But who can banish pain and dark regret?

And so, beloved, for love's sake I would bear
  These heavy hours and call thee back no more.
  Knowing that thou art sheltered and secure
From the keen ills that all who live must share,
  I would endure the burden and the heat—
  Call evil good, and think death's sharp draught
    sweet.

INVOLUTE

Rare pearls are buried in the sea,
  Gems hidden in the earth's deep breast;
Leaves screen the rose, and tenderly
  The mother bird secludes her nest;
But love, and love alone, conceals
A wonder that no sign reveals.

We catch the sparkle of its foam,
  The far-off rainbow gleam eludes;
Above the warm, sequestered home
  Dovelike the spell of heaven broods;
Yet with more fragrant fold on fold
Love veils its inmost heart of gold.

MATED

Interpreter of deep, unknown delights,
  Of loveliness that wavered through my dreams,
  The iris glamour over far-off streams,
The glory beckoning to uplifting heights,

Thine is the strength of granite hills unscaled,
  Thine is the tenderness of hidden tears;
  Thine, youth immortal and rich, garnered years,
The mystic veiling and the joy unveiled.

Thou art the summer's sweetest lingering song,
  The crystal starriness of wintry nights;
  Thou art the strange fire of auroral lights,
And the clear hearth flame, warm and close and
    strong.

Smite thou my soul and send its high notes ringing,
Dwell in my heart and tune each pulse to singing!

CAPACITY

Eager Childhood holding up
Unto Joy its shallow cup
  Sees a beaded beaker glowing;
We of longer, sadder years
Half forget how few quick tears
  Fill that cup to overflowing.

THE CRICKETS' SONG

From wild grasses overripe,
  From the starlit meadows near,
Hear the hosts of crickets pipe
  Shadowy music, thin and clear!

In the silver mesh are caught
  Echoes eerie and aloof,
Strains of sweet familiar thought,
  Summer rains upon the roof.

Something in the haunting rhyme
  Lures us to an elfin quest;
Somewhere in the ceaseless chime
  Is a spell that lulls to rest.

Intimate and alien, too,
  In your small life's dewy round
Have you touched the cobweb clue
  By which you and we are bound?

FAR AND NEAR

When Love sits by the fire and sings
  A tender little song,
With the sweet thought of homely things
  That must to Love belong,
Oh, who would dream of sweeping wings
  And flight so far and strong!

When poised upon some shining ring,
  High in aerial blue,
Can Love forget the hidden spring,
  The garden cool with dew—
The lowly joys that flowerlike cling
  About the place Love knew?

AU REVOIR

By wild laces lightly spun
Growing hoary in the sun,
By the sumach's reddening plume,
By thin grasses' coppery bloom—
We by these and many a sign
Mark the Summertime's decline.

August's singing undertone
Dies in the hot locust's drone;
Shadows dim the prospect fair,
Hints of mist are in the air;
Something thinner than a cloud—
Is it wedding-garb or shroud
From some wondrous Eastern loom?—
Veils the Summer's overbloom.

Surely it was yesterday
That she trod her Persian way,

While her maidens, flower bedight,
Tossed her garlands made of light,
Brought her goblets brimmed with dew
By the sunbeams smitten through.

Summertime, sweet Summertime,
In a vanished age and clime
Did you walk as here to-day
Down a slowly shadowing way?
When your green torch flares to-morrow
Shall we for your old self sorrow,
As you see us grieving now
For the ripe leaf on your brow?

AFTER ALL

I shall go back to the old, old places,
To the moss-grown spring that bubbles clear in the meadow;
To the slender paths in the fields, the trace of forgotten footsteps.
Back to the little house where the sweetbrier clung to the window;
To the garden where snowdrops and iris and hollyhocks bloomed.
In my dreams they are blooming together—
And robins build their nests to the hum of the bees June laden.
The sunrise and gloaming mingle, days and nights in sweet confusion,
When the world is made for a child's wild heart,
And the winds to be its rhythm.

WILD GARDENS

On the ripened grass is a bloomy mist
Of silver and rose and amethyst
  Where the long June wave has run.

There are glints of copper and tarnished brass,
And hyacinthine flames that pass
  From the green fires of the sun.

This web of a thousand gleams and glows
Was woven silently out of the snows
  And the patient shine and rain.

It was fashioned cunningly day by day
From the silken spear to the pollened spray
  With its folded sheaths of grain.

Oh, gardens of grasses deep and wild,
So dear to the vagrant and the child
  And the singer of an hour.

To the wayworn soul you give your balm,
Your cup of peace, your stringèd psalm,
  Your grace of bud and flower.

MEMORIAL LINES

(George D. Armstrong, D.D., Norfolk, Virginia.)

Rich in honors as in years,
  He is gathered unto rest,
While his people's falling tears
  His worth and their love attest.

Wisdom, learning, holiness,
  With humility sublime,
Shall we say he "did" possess?—
  Do these fruits decay with time?

Pure and simple was the creed
  That his inmost spirit knew;
Gentleness of thought and deed
  From deep-rooted goodness grew.

Shepherd! not thy flock alone
  Stands in reverent grief apart;
Every church called thee her own
  And thy shrine is in each heart.

SPENCER TRASK

Stunned into silence is the clanging mart,
A hush falls on the templed place of art;
While church and state and many a lowly heart
Mourn for this hero of our later days—
Too simple for the laurelled crown of praise.
Earth weeps for manhood's splendid ripened flower,
The swift extinguishment of vital power;
For him—loved of the gods—forever young,
From old Titanic Norsemen fitly sprung—
From Vikings in the mighty sagas sung.

Large were his aims. Quickly the golden thought
Into a jewelled deed was wisely wrought,
Young workers in their summer homes of rest,
And stricken children rose and called him blest.
The loving servitor, the happy guest—
All from his presence drew the tonic cheer
Of a deep spring, with waters ever clear.

Yet he knew grief, and sharp disaster met
With buoyant mood, disdaining weak regret.

Sad is his wide domain among the hills,
His Yaddo pine to lonelier music thrills;
But sadder yet his islands of the Lake
Where Art and Nature wedded for Love's sake.
When the long chains of lamps at twilight's gloom
Shall flush as rosy garlands into bloom,
And from his belfry chime the soft-toned bell—
Poignant the lingering echoes of farewell.

LIGHTER VERSE

THE MUSE ASTRAY

Once in a land where memories throng,
  By a far Southern sea,
A poet sang a little song
  Of lyric ecstasy.

He caught—or thought he caught—the glow
  Of rapt Italian vales,
The lustre of unstained snow,
  The thrill of nightingales.

And not alone it charmed the sense,
  Since on the theme was cast
The precious antique influence
  Of a long, storied past.

"Now," cried he, "for a magazine,
  I'm puzzled as to which
My brilliantly word-painted scene
  Most fitly shall enrich."

The dove returned; one tiny leaf
  Dejectedly it bore.
The singer stood transfixed with grief,
  Yet sent it forth once more;

And back it came, and back, until—
  So early trained to roam—
If one but gave the thing its will
  The carrier song flew home.

MORAL

Be good, sweet muse, and wisely choose
  Some fresher, homelier strain:
Shall Kalamazoo, Metuchen, too,
  And Oshkosh sue in vain?

A BALLADE OF REFRAIN

(With apologies to Austin Dobson)

When moribund novelists still rehearse
  Their themes extinct and their passions dead;
When our shelves are weighted by recent verse,
  And our tables groan with their books unread;
  When a mob is waiting to snatch the thread
As it spins away from the whirring brain,
  Before the ink from the pen is shed,
Then hey! for the hero who can refrain!

When lettered knowledge becomes a curse—
  That may swiftly fall on the curser's head—
When the rising floods of the scribes immerse,
  And our tables groan with their books unread;
  When the delicate soul is bruised and bled
For the greed of glory, the glut of gain;
  When the eyes of the readers are dull as lead,
Then hey! for the hero who can refrain!

When writers fatten a hungry purse
  With words that were happier left unsaid;
When trying their best they try us worse,
  And our tables groan with their books unread—
  When the guests go out from the feast unfed—
Or overfed to repletion's pain—
  When reader and writer refuse to wed,
Then hey! for the hero who can refrain!

L'ENVOI

When we yearn for the elemental bread,
And our tables groan with their books unread;
When the crescent mind begins to wane,
Then hey! for the hero who can refrain!

THE VERSES THAT WE WRITE

Oh, the foolish little verses that the wisest of us
write!
Oh, the silly, siliy stanzas that we wantonly indite
When the little brain is tender and the little heart
is light!

We may burn their tattered fragments, strew their
ashes to the wind,
But their evil shapes pursue us with a malice fierce
and blind,
For the friend who keeps a scrap-book is most ruth-
less of his kind.

Oh, the verses, riper verses, which it is our honest
creed
Should refresh the thirsting millions, satisfy their
highest need,
Set the world to nobler music—could it be induced
to read!

But these verses, priceless verses, which we offer
without stint,
Stamped as Poesy's true coinage, fresh and golden
from the mint,
Somehow seem to be the verses we can never get in
print!

A NEW FASHION

Who draweth nigh with joyful dance,
With laughter in her sunlit glance?
Whose witcheries about her cling,
More strong with each successive spring?
What happy maid with cheek aglow
And eye alight? Ah—say it low!—
    It is the baby's grandmamma!

The grandma that we used to know—
It seems not many years ago—
A goodly dame with bag and cap,
And shining needles in her lap,
Hath she become the airy sprite
That flashed before our dazzled sight,
    Our little daughter's grandmamma?

What sunshine melted all the snows?
When turned the sear leaf to the rose?

What priceless alchemy of youth
Creates this miracle? Forsooth,
Doth Time himself, enamoured, stand,
Take back his arrows from the hand
    Of baby Madge's grandmamma?

Oh, who can work the wonder out?
Your withered crone was good, no doubt;
We will most tenderly embalm
Her in those hours of amber calm,
If always with us there may stay
The grandma of our better day—
    Our ultra-modern grandmamma!

BOB-WHITE

In far-away Virginian vales
  I loved him as I loved no other—
Why should the thought of toast and quails
  Rise with the name of this small brother?

We flew across the grassy fields—
  Both innocent and shy and slender;
What tenderness the memory yields!
  He was—I did not dream how tender.

Dear little friend of days gone by,
  I might not know you should I meet you,
And at some formal dinner I
  Might wickedly forget and eat you!

A MANHATTAN LOVE-SONG

Come live with me and be my love;
  But whereto shall we go?
Up in the Hundreds, or above,
  Perhaps a mile or so.

'Tis there the gentle subway flows
  Beneath its cool arcade;
And there the sweet apartment grows
  For childless couples made.

'Tis there we step upon ourselves
  When thoughtlessly inclined;
Our little home is packed in shelves—
  O darling, don't you mind!

For I will bring you chops and tripe,
  And love without alloy,
And let you watch me smoke my pipe
  And quaff my cup of joy.

Come live with me and be my love.
  The range is nice and new;
We may not hear the turtle-dove—
  Our turtle's in the stew.

ONE SUMMER

June brought our gentle Anna Burns,
  Whose reign was scarce two moons;
Her saintly memory oft returns—
  Not once our silver spoons.

Next came the halting "Winnipeg"—
  By grace called Winifred—
We could forgive her wooden leg,
  But not her wooden head.

So, soon the haughty Catherine glared
  Across the darkling plain;
Our stalwart village marshal dared
  To drag her to the train.

Three weeks the Rose of Hungary bloomed
  Beside our dusty range;
Then left her subjects abject, doomed
  To chaos and to change.

"Come back! Come back!" we cried in grief,
  "Sub-Rosa all shall be!"
She turned as turns the withering leaf,
  Then whirled across the lea.

Since then our gates wide open stand
  From weary sun to sun,
Inviting any vagrant band—
  Come Zulu, Slav, or Hun!

YE GENTIL KNIGHTE

He drew his rapier from its sheath,
  This knight of old romance;
His lady wore a lily wreath—
  And something more, perchance.

"Oh, haste thee now, belovèd, haste!"
  Her tears were as the dew,
"For we must pass the fearsome waste
  While cruel foes pursue."

Anon she tore her golden hair,
  Anon she laughed in glee.
In truth, the maid was strangely fair,
  And fairly strange was she.

The knight still kept his keen blade drawn,
  Though not a foe was nigh;
But Indian bands, Moors, Turks, drew on
  While yet the moon was high.

With nonchalance how debonair
  They rout the villains, while
The knight wears still his knightly air,
  The damsel wears a smile!

For months these guileless children roam
  Where the deep wild allures,
Far from the sweet delights of home,
  From man and manicures.

Yet brighter than the harvest moon
  His armor shone unscarred;
Her snowy gown, her silken shoon,
  Nor spot, nor blemish marred.

'Tis not in our distempered dreams
  We meet these lovers gay,
But where the page with history teems
  In a novel of to-day!

A FALSE PROMISE

When the web is on the grass
No rain can come to pass.
—*Old Saying.*

"I'll put my old umbrella by,
  My rubbers fling away;
Though somewhat dubious is the sky,
  It cannot rain to-day."

She wore her very daintiest gown,
  Her filmy hat was white;
Within an hour the floods came down—
  Alack, the piteous sight!

Oh, all the jewelled webs were out
  By trusting elfins spun;
And shall the little people doubt
  The fealty of the sun?

AN ENDLESS CHAIN

Thanks be for praises such as this:
  "Your kind remembrance came"—
Since it were surely hit or miss
  To call it by its name.

"Your beautiful and useful gift"—
  The thing glares at you now,
When to its dim retreat you lift
  A pained, inquiring brow.

This fearful shape of twisted bows—
  All stiff with paint and lace—
To frighten off hard-won repose
  Claims on your couch a place.

But hold your peace awhile, and then
  Another Christmas Day
These things shall scurry forth again
  Upon their harrowing way.

THE WAYWARD MUSE

Whenever I lay my poor head on its pillow,
The Muse takes my harp from its place on the willow—
That region of silence to which I'd consigned it,
Not dreaming that she would come meddling and find it—
And all the night-time she keeps up such a tinkling,
I'd order her off, if I dared, in a twinkling.

When my thoughts are intent on a new gown or bonnet,
She has ill-timed suggestions of lyric or sonnet;
If I go in the kitchen to get up a dinner,
There, too, she intrudes, the insidious sinner!
Though the world needs good cooks, and can spare a poor poet,
The Muse is a woman, and surely must know it.

But if some fine day I'm induced to believe her,
And sit down arrayed in my best to receive her,
My simplest of innocent faith she disgraces
By granting no glimpse of her archest of faces;
For no matter how much she is frowned on and
chidden,
The Muse loves to come unannounced and unbidden.

AFTER THE WEDDING

Well, she is gone—the bride so dear—
  And yet we are resigned;
We almost think that she is here,
  She left so much behind.

Sometimes we hunger for her touch,
  Her tender, wistful smile;
And we might miss her very much
  If every little while

Her special greetings were not brought:
  "Do send my bag and keys";
Or, "In a shower we were caught;
  Express umbrellas, please."

"Jack thinks he left his purse with you,
  And maybe in the hall
His watch, his pipe, an overshoe—
  I can't remember all."

She writes such sweet, staccato notes:
  "We'd think of you at home
Though we might be at John O'Groat's—
  Oh, how I miss my comb!"

So multiplex the favors are,
  We, with the poet, find
That "She who goes is happier far
  Than those she leaves behind."

A SINGULAR PLURALITY

The poet dreamed, and as he dreamed—
  Amazing strange!—he slept;
The great "Pacific" had, it seemed,
  Both of his poems kept,

And sent with promptitude a check—
  Not on his hopes this time—
With praise well measured, quite a peck,
  And begged for all his rhyme.

The morning broke, the poet woke—
  Alas for grief like this!
One little "slip" between the lip
  And Fame's full cup of bliss.

But pause! upon that type-writ screed,
  Phrased with such touching grace,
That "neither is of use," we read;
  But why the "is" erase?

That blazing editorial star,
  Or one moved by his law,
Has scratched out "is"—that's singular!—
  And made it "are"; the awe,

The glory that doth hedge about
  The great sanctorum chair
Just one amended word strikes out—
  Our poet walks on air!

But now no more to that high star,
  By which he's steered so long,
He hitches up his little car,
  His chariot of song.

THE END

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